# NOTES ON *SCOLOPOSTETHUS PUBERULUS* HORVATH AND *LIMNOPORUS RUFOSCUTELLATUS* (LATREILLE) (HEMIPTERA) IN IRELAND

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## Scolopostethus puberulus Horvath

Recently I discovered two Irish specimens of the lygaeid *Scolopostethus puberulus* Horvath preserved in the J. N. Halbert Collection of Irish Hemiptera in the National Museum of Ireland. They are labelled in Halbert's hand "Curracloe 17.6.'36. J. N. H." and "*S. puberulus* Horv". There is also a determination label stating "*puberulus* Hor det. W. E. China 1936". Fortunately many of Halbert's manuscripts, notes etc. have survived and these include a letter dated 18 December 1936 from China (British Museum (Natural History)) who commented "The *Scolopostethus* species from Curracloe is *S. puberulus* Horv. as you surmised". Halbert's (1935) list of the Irish Hemiptera predates this find and the record appears therefore to be unpublished. The author's copy of the list is annotated by him and it noted that the material was collected under rushes at Curracloe marsh. The right antenna of one specimen is abnormal (Fig. 1).

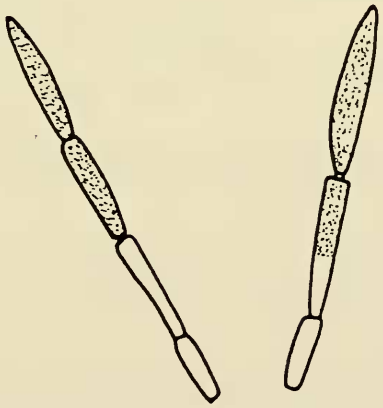

Fig. 1. The antennae of the abnormal specimen of *Scolopostethus puberulus* Horvath.

Curracloe marsh is situated in Co. Wexford (T 113270) and a description of it will be found in O'Connor and O'Connor (1983). These authors added the sawfly *Calameuta pallipes* (Klug) to the Irish list from there and noted that in 1982 the marsh was being drained. A visit in 1984 revealed that much of the marsh had been destroyed by drainage. It is not known if the population of *S. puberulus* has been affected.

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*S. puberulus* is an interesting addition to the Irish fauna. In Great Britain, with the exception of an odd specimen once found in the Scottish Highlands, it is largely confined to East Anglia and the coastal counties from Kent to Cornwall. There are a few records from Glos., Oxon., Surrey, Berks. and Somerset. Damp mosses, vegetation at the foot of cliffs and moss on chalk downs are amongst its habitats. The presence of the insect in East Anglia suggests that it prefers low-lying, perhaps, marshy places (Southwood and Leston, 1959).

**Limnoporus rufoscutellatus (Latreille)**

Although found throughout the Palaearctic, *Limnoporus rufoscutellatus* (Latreille) is scarce in western Europe. Southwood and Leston (1959) knew of only 15 records of macropters taken in the British Isles and these had been collected over some ninety years. The specimens had been found between March and early June. No nymphs had been obtained and no captures made of more than two individuals at a time. Most records were in Kent or Norfolk. These authors suggested therefore that the species was a migrant in the British Isles and that it was unable to establish itself.

Halbert (1935) reported three Irish specimens; two of which are unlocalised individuals taken by A. H. Haliday in the nineteenth century. The third one was captured by E. F. Bullock in a bog-pool close to Lough Guitane, Killarney, Co. Kerry, on 23 April 1929. Halbert suggested that this site might be the very place that Haliday found his specimens. On 23 September 1960, a fourth Irish specimen was taken from a lake in Co. Clare. Lansbury (1961) stated that it may have been an arrival from the continent but since it is the first occurrence in late September in the British Isles, the species possibly breeds in western Ireland.

In view of this gerrid's rarity I was surprised to find fifteen previously unreported specimens in the Halbert and Bullock Collections in the museum. Thirteen were taken at Cahernane, Killarney, Co. Kerry in September 1938. An annotation in Halbert's list states that several specimens were found, at Cahernane by Bullock, running very actively on the surface of a dyke flowing into Lough Leane (one of the Killarney Lakes) on 11 September 1938. A further two specimens in the Bullock Collection are labelled respectively "Ballast Killarney 9.47 E.F.B." and "Flesk Killarney 9.58 E.F.B.".

Leston (1956) suggested that Holland was a probable source of the specimens immigrating into Britain. He considered that all the bugs were of the previous year and reached these islands from a pre- or post-hibernation flight. However on the basis of the capture of the September specimen in Clare, Lansbury (1961) stated that Leston's hypothesis was not proven. The discovery of the Killarney material strongly supports Lansbury's theory that *L. rufoscutellatus*

is breeding in Ireland. I suspect that Bullock stopped collecting the species because he had sufficient specimens and ran out of space in which to store them. There are two instances where specimens were mounted one above the other on the same pin. Certainly, the south-west of Ireland warrants an intensive search for breeding populations of *L. rufoscutellatus*.

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# Current Literature

**Hawk-moths of the British Isles** by **Michael Easterbrook**. 24pp. 26 colour, 6 bw illustrations. 3 figs. Wrappers. Shire Publications Ltd. £1.25.

This little booklet provides a general introduction to the British hawk-moths. After a brief treatment of the general biology of the Sphingidae, each of the 17 resident and immigrant species is considered in terms of its distribution, foodplants, larva and other interesting features. The book concludes with a brief outline of methods of study and breeding techniques.

It is perhaps inevitable that such a concise treatment of a group of insects will result in omissions and generalisations. Whilst the reviewer would challenge one or two points of detail, the overall impression is of an informative and readable text. The photographic illustrations are mainly of living insects and, whilst not comprehensive, are of very high standard. The sheer number of colour illustrations in a book of this price makes it very good value indeed. P.A.S.